The Ballarat Naturalist

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Winter sunshine puts an early morning spotlight on hundreds of Orb-weaving Spider webs at Scarsdale.

Some Creswick Goldfields Sites now listed on Victorian Heritage Inventory

Over the past year FNCB members have worked with other groups to document and seek recognition for some historic sites in Creswick Regional Park. Heritage Victoria has now completed assessments of the 'site cards' submitted for 4 sites, and found that all meet the 'threshold policy'. These are now listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory, which means that the places cannot be disturbed without authority.

The sites are shown below with their **Inventory Numbers**, which allow the public to find information about these places by searching for these numbers on the Victorian Heritage Database.

https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/

Slaty Creek Chinese Garden and Sluicing Site – H7623-0343
https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/search?kw=H7623-0343&aut_off=1

Chinese Hand-Puddlers and Huts Site – H7623-0344
https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/search?kw=H7623-0344&aut_off=1

Garden of the Manila Men Site – H7623-0345
https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/207145

Back Creek Chinese Garden and Orchard– H7623-0346
[Not yet uploaded to HV data base]

In addition to the above newly listed heritage sites, extra information has been provided for a previously listed site, which differs from all other market garden sites in the area:
Ah Young's Garden - H7623-0336 [being amended]
https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/195111

Much of the information on these heritage sites was sourced from Creswick historian David Henderson, and his maps and publications of the Creswick and District Historical Society.

Bernadette C, Margaret R, John P

FNCB member demonstrating the technique used at a Chinese Hand Gold Puddling Mill site.

Oudemansiella gigaspora at Scarsdale this month

Show & Tell/ Field Reports (from June 4th meeting)

Peter and Claire reported that they recently learnt that Green Swamp, a site managed by Nature Glenelg Trust visited during the recent SEANA Autumn Camp with 160+ brolga counted, has been removed from the list of permitted duck-hunting sites.

Bill showed a photo of a recently deceased Ring-tail Possum that had almost been decapitated by an unknown "assailant" at his Smythesdale property.

Judith reported days of countless floating webs with baby spiders attached blowing around at the Ballarat Observatory. She has also spotted about six 10c piece holes in the ground about 30cm apart near the Observatory but hasn't been able to find out what creates/ lives in them yet. A resident male Grey Huntsman is living in the Observatory too.

Nina reported lots of little frogs hopping around her property at Hensley Park, and had heard a report that there were two brolgas spotted on the wetland at the orphanage.

Val has lots of frogs croaking at her place in Ballarat East too. She has also observed the return of Magpies to full force around her area, with 8 or 10 carolling each morning after much smaller numbers seen and heard over the last couple of years.

Carol reported several observations from Lake Wendouree: a pair of Black Swans who obviously nested very early and have three-week-old cygnets; a new young rakali boldly exploring in broad daylight at Fairyland, and reports of Rakali at Durham Point and down near the Olympic Rings.

Graeme and Vireya found a Stanwellia, a large species of Trapdoor Spider, near the pile of firewood just brought inside, causing quite some excitement before it was bravely relocated outside. Graeme has posted the record on iNaturalist.

Geoff watched a huge Bronzewing pigeon wandering around on the Ballarat Golf Course, nearly as big as a hen.

Members' Images - June

A series of short videos taken by a wildlife camera with night vision at Graeme and Vireya's Lal Lal property was shown. Creatures "captured" included rosella and butcherbird, sugar glider, feathertail glider, agile antechinus, owlet nightjar, brushtail possum, ringtail possum, fox, kookaburra and a black rat! A selection of still images from the videos is presented on the next two pages.

Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus*

Agile Antechinus *Antechinus agilis*

Agile Antechinus *Antechinus agilis*

Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*

New National Parks on their Way

During the last week of June, 2021, Matt Ruchel from the Victorian National Parks Association told us about the creation of three new national parks for Victoria. This significant announcement by the Andrews Government is the result of the Central West Investigations undertaken over the past few years. Many field nats contributed to submissions and reports as part of the comprehensive enquiry.

The commitment made now is to create the new Wombat-Lerderderg National Park (near Daylesford), Mount Buangor National Park (near Beaufort) and the Pyrenees National Park (near Avoca). They will provide permanent protection for over 370 rare and threatened animals, plants and insects and it represents the most significant addition to our parks estate in over a decade – 50,000 hectares of protected bushland into Victoria's wonderful parks estate.

"This is a win for our wildlife, their habitats and the communities who can enjoy these new parks, whilst protecting their natural values at the same time. As Victoria fronts up to alarming rates of ecosystem decline and the real-time impacts of climate change, this news could not come at a better time"

Of course, decisions like this come with strings attached. The proposal has been tabled in Parliament, but the legislation still has to be developed and then must pass both houses of parliament to be brought into law.

The good news is that this is a significant step that has relied on the passion and goodwill of naturalists and others over some years to bring it to pass. Congratulations to all those who made submissions and contributions to the study.

Diary Dates - Excursions and Meetings Coming Up

July 2 - 7.30 pm John Gregurke presents The Simpson Desert, plus SEANA excursion plans
Note: this meeting is via Zoom. See link in separate email.

July 4 - "Stringybark" Scarsdale - explore the forest, find some fungi, enjoy lunch around the fire, inside or out.

August 6 - 7.30 pm John Lenegan, ANGAIR presenting "Interactions with Nature" via Zoom.
August 8 - Fungi Foray led by Ema Corro, mycologist from Bacchus Marsh. Sites to be determined and advised soon.

Nov 5 - 7.30 pm Advance Notice: This year's Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture is to be delivered by our own Emily Noble. Emily's topic is Woodland Bird Habitat Restoration, based on her extensive knowledge of and work at Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary.

There are currently no number limits for excursions, however health restrictions still apply, so please bring a mask and keep distance of 1.5m between people. Of course, if you are not well or suffering any flu-like symptoms, please stay at home.

Committee

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Meetings - due to COVID-19, meetings may have number limits applied. Members will be kept informed of meeting venues and restrictions as needed.

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